



## Community Water Fluoridation [Revised 2/26/2012] 4.0

The New Hampshire Oral Health Coalition recognizes that tooth decay is a progressive infectious disease effecting overall health throughout the life-cycle. It is the single most common chronic childhood disease. Untreated decay can lead to pain, swelling, infection, destruction of teeth, damage to tissue, difficulty eating, problems with attendance at school or work, high dental expenses for repair, or costly emergency room services. Decay is highly preventable.

Fluoride is a naturally-occurring mineral found throughout the country in local water supplies. When added to community water supplies it is an easily-adjusted, low-cost way of reducing the incidence and severity of tooth decay. The American Dental Association reports that the cost of life-time water fluoridation for an individual is less than the cost of a single dental filling.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) consider community water fluoridation to be one of the top ten public health achievements of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Nationally, we have over 60 years of experience and research on the effectiveness of this preventive intervention. New Hampshire ranks 40<sup>th</sup> in the nation for the percent of the state's population on a fluoridated water supply.

### NHOHC supports

- Community water fluoridation of public water supplies be adjusted to levels recommended by the CDC;
- Primary care and oral health providers provide an oral health risk assessment as part of comprehensive preventive care for children. Physicians should consider the fluoride level of the child's drinking water supply as those dependent on well water and non-fluoridated public supplies will have unknown, and at times naturally-occurring high, fluoride levels in their water, and apply fluoride varnish when indicated;
- CDC guidance states that children under 6 months of age exclusively consuming infant formula reconstituted with fluoridated water may have an increased chance for mild dental fluorosis. To lessen this chance, use low-fluoride bottled water some of the time to mix formula.

### Resources

American Academy of Pediatrics Oral Health Risk Assessment Tool  
[http://brightfutures.aap.org/Oral\\_Health\\_Risk\\_Assessment\\_Resources.html](http://brightfutures.aap.org/Oral_Health_Risk_Assessment_Resources.html)

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Community Water Fluoridation Questions and Answers  
[http://www.cdc.gov/fluoridation/fact\\_sheets/cwf\\_qa.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/fluoridation/fact_sheets/cwf_qa.htm)

American Dental Association, 10 Reasons to Fluoridate Public Water  
[http://www.ada.org/sections/newsAndEvents/pdfs/article\\_10reasons.pdf](http://www.ada.org/sections/newsAndEvents/pdfs/article_10reasons.pdf)

*The New Hampshire Oral Health Coalition is a state-wide diverse collaborative of organizations, agencies and individuals focusing on oral health education, prevention, access, workforce development, and advocacy aimed to promote optimal oral health for the people of New Hampshire.*